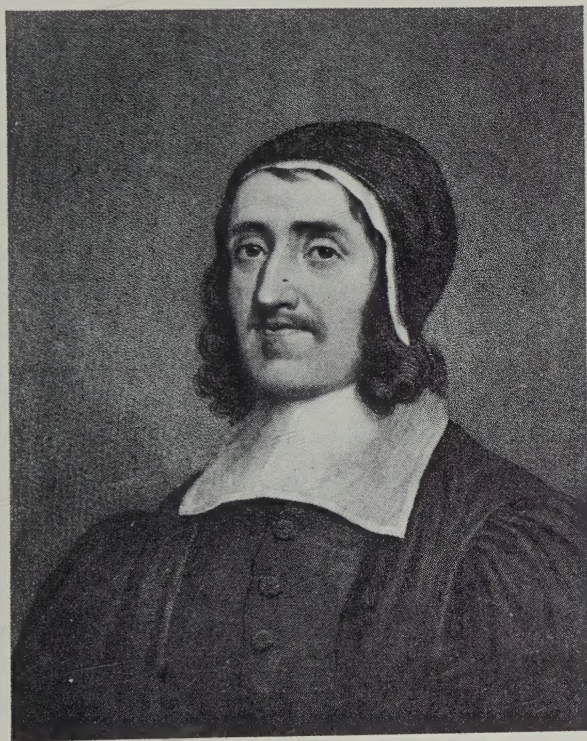


# The Hymn

OCTOBER 1952

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RICHARD BAXTER

1615 - 1691

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Volume 3

Number 4

## The President's Message

I have just returned from the memorable service in Washington, D. C., launching the nation-wide observance celebrating the completion of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible. Five to six thousand people gathered in the National Guard Armory for this occasion. On the platform were many notables including the Secretary of State, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, the Chaplains of the Senate and the House, the Chairman of the Armed Forces Chaplains' Board, officials of the National Council of Churches, representatives of the diplomatic corps, and other distinguished individuals. Copies of the new version of the Bible were presented to the State Department, the Supreme Court, the Library of Congress, the Chaplains' Board, and the Washington Council of Churches. Famous Bibles, loaned from the Library of Congress, were on exhibition, including a Gutenberg Bible. Three major addresses were given; massed choirs sang effectively; a choric speech choir made an impressive presentation; and last, but not least, the new Bible hymn by Sarah E. Taylor, entitled "The Divine Gift" was sung for the first time at any official gathering.

My part in the program as the representative of The Hymn Society was to make a brief introduction before the new hymn was sung, and on behalf of the Society to present it to the assembled company, and through them, to the nation.

Among many impressions from this experience are these: the Society was privileged to be associated with high company—probably the most distinguished in its thirty years; second, that the Society made an important contribution to this unique occasion in providing the new hymn; third, that these men in high government positions who were present have deep religious conviction and a genuine reverence for the Bible; fourth, that the Bible provides the central rallying point for all Christians; fifth, that when the Christian forces unite in a common project they have a strength which makes possible an impressive public demonstration and devotion. Above all, I am sure that the Bible message is the answer to the pressing needs of individuals and society today.

—DEANE EDWARDS



# The Hymn

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All correspondence concerning membership, literature of the society, or change of address should be directed to The Hymn Society of America, 297 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, New York.

Editor's address: Rev. George Litch Knight, West Side Presbyterian Church, Ridgewood, New Jersey. Telephone: Ridgewood 6-7967.

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## The Editor's Column

Two especially encouraging signs are on the hymnic horizon. The first is a series of articles appearing in *THE PRESBYTERIAN OUTLOOK*, the official newspaper of the Presbyterian Church, U.S., known more familiarly as the "Southern Presbyterian Church." The series from the facile pen of Dr. James R. Sydnor, is directed to the improvement of congregational singing.

An extensive review of these articles will appear in a future issue of *THE HYMN*, but one is tempted to give much space to their praise at this time. Dr. Sydnor writes as one who knows his subject thoroughly, but with a complete absence of the "snobbery" which occasionally comes from the expert in this area of study. He is honest in his appraisal of the hymn situation in his own Church and has some worthwhile comments to make about it. He approaches it humbly and with a sense of appropriateness which is most refreshing.

We commend the editors of *THE PRESBYTERIAN OUTLOOK* for their appreciation of the prophet in their midst and for their willingness to undertake the publication of such an extensive series of articles. They will not be thanked by all of their readers, but one is heartened by such courage. It is our fond hope that ultimately all of the material presented may be reprinted in permanent form.

Another bright portent in the hymnic world is the forthcoming publication of Dr. Messenger's book. Our fellow-editor is one of the leading authorities in the world in the field of Medieval Latin hymns. Her writings on this subject are widely appreciated.

Dr. Messenger is a thorough scholar, but happily possessed of a charming style which makes her material both valuable and delightful to read. She has keen perception and a broad humanistic cultivation which lends an aura of dignity and vitality to her studies. There is great need for a book, written in a style comprehensible to the average reader, about Latin Hymns; this is especially true in the light of an increased use of them in contemporary hymnals. It is our conviction that this need is met in Dr. Messenger's new book, mentioned elsewhere in this issue of our periodical.



# The Influence of Richard Baxter on English Hymnody

HARRY ESCOTT

NO STUDY OF the history and science of the modern English hymn would seem complete without a chapter on the contribution of Richard Baxter, 1615-91, Puritan preacher and author of *The Saint's Everlasting Rest*, who, we think, is the first hymnologist of pervasive influence within Dissent. Baxter's hymnological importance has been overlooked probably because of his greatness in other fields of thought and action. Yet he it is who constituted the living link between the work of the hymnists and devotional poets in the English Church of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and the modern hymn soon to spring from the loins of Dissent, and be dressed a little later in strength and beauty by the independent Isaac Watts.

A long and scholarly life fitted Baxter for this transitional role. "He lived alongside of Pope and Addison, as well as Shakespeare; of Isaac Watts, as well as Giles Fletcher and George Herbert; of Sir Robert Walpole, as well as Sir Walter Raleigh." (1)

An enthusiastic admirer of George Herbert he dedicated some verses to him in *Poetical Fragments*, 1683. And indeed in most of Baxter's poetry in this volume one may sense that "delightful fervour of the simplest love to God" which pervades all the lyrics of the saintly parson of Bemerton. "Next the Scripture Poems," says Baxter, "there is none so savoury to me as Mr. George Herbert's - - - Herbert speaks to God like one that really believeth in God, and whose business in this world is most with God. Heart-work and Heaven-work make up his books." (Preface to *Poetical Fragments*, 1683) Baxter was John Mason's friend too, and shares the strain of seraphic praise that is the chief feature of the verse of Mason, though in Baxter's case it is more manifest in his prose, especially in glowing passages of *The Saint's Everlasting Rest*, than in his poetry.

Baxter links the nucleus of hymns added to the *Old Version* to the work of the immediate predecessors of Watts. For among the "Gospel Hymns" appended to Baxter's *Paraphrase on the Psalms of David* are metrical versions of the *Magnificat*, *Nunc Dimittis*, *Benedicite*, *Te Deum* and so forth; and to legitimize his practice he says in the preface, "those that published the Old Church-Psalms added many useful Hymns that are still printed with the Psalms in Metre." In addition, by his encouragement of William

Barton's hymn writing, Baxter did much to bring to birth the Scripture paraphrase and so exercised an indirect though powerful influence on the early hymnody of Dissent.

Baxter's own experiments in psalmodic reform — *Paraphrase on the Psalms of David* and *Monthly Preparation for Holy Communion . . . with Divine Hymns* — were not published till after his death. His *Poetical Fragments*, which have since given to the Church a few fine hymns, was issued towards the close of his life, and its contents were never intended to be used in public worship. "All that I have to say for these Fragments," he tells us in the preface, "is, that being fitted to Women, and vulgar Wits, which are the far greater number, they may be useful to such, though contemptible to those of high Elevation and Expectation." Nevertheless a few of these fragments unite qualities that are the essential ingredients of a good hymn — simplicity, sincerity, fervor and logical strength. Indeed one feature of Baxter's affinity with Watts is the combination in his writings, in verse and prose, of somber fervor and logical strength. Like Watts he is a logician who finds room for religious passion. "I confess, when God awakeneth in me those Passions which I account rational and holy, that I think I was half a Fool before, and have small comfort in sleepy Reason." (Preface to *Poetical Fragments*, 1683)

Also, as Watts did later, he appealed to the worshiper's experience: "Those that deny the lawful use of singing . . . do disclose their unheavenly unexperienced hearts. . . . Had they felt the heavenly delights that many of their brethren in such duties have felt, I think they would have been of another mind." (2) In his *Short Essay Toward the Improvement of Psalmody* (1707) Isaac Watts almost echoes Baxter's words; "Let us have a Care," he says, "lest we rob our Souls and the Churches of those Divine Comforts of evangelic Psalmody, by a fondness of our old and preconceived Opinions." This dual emphasis on the legitimacy of appealing to the worshiper's passions and experience, not wanting in Puritan preaching, but nowhere more splendidly crystallized than in the writings of Baxter, was carried over from him into the sphere of psalmody by Isaac Watts. Compare Watts' historic preface to *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* (1707) with the great passages on praise in *The Saint's Everlasting Rest*, and it will be clear that young Watts, who knew Baxter's books while a student, and who later said that he would rather be the author of *A Call to the Unconverted* than of *Paradise Lost*, was influenced by the



divine temper as well as by some of the liturgical ideals of Richard Baxter. Thus, even in an Age of Reason, was provided a living link between the evangelicalism of the seventeenth century and the literary and religious Romanticism of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

## II.

But Baxter's chief influence on Nonconformist hymnody prior to Watts, he exerted as the leader of a movement for the improvement of psalmody, at first mainly confined to English Presbyterianism; a movement resulting in a revival of interest in the performance of worship-song. Compare the *Practical Discourses of Singing in the Worship of God . . . by Several Ministers*, (London, 1708). The volume contains half-a-dozen sermons on psalmody by six ministers of note in London. Most of them are Presbyterians and their discourses reflect the influence of Baxter and a generous attitude to the hymn reform of Isaac Watts. The movement also resulted in the emergence of a school of hymn writers whose chief function was the provision of Gospel hymns for use at the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. These writers are William Barton, Matthew Henry, Joseph Boyse, Joseph Stennett and Daniel Burgess.

As was to be expected, the inadequacy of the metrical psalm was felt more keenly at the Communion Service than in any other part of the Church's worship. "Where can you find," Isaac Watts writes, "a Psalm that speaks the Miracles of Wisdom and Power as they are discover'd in a crucify'd Christ?" (*A Short Essay*) Within Anglicanism there had been an early attempt to make up for this deficiency by the addition of a Sacramental hymn to the Old Version of the metrical psalter, namely, *A Thanksgiving after the Receiving of the Lord's Supper*, beginning "The Lord be thankèd for his gifts." Yet the *Westminster Directory* which in a general way represented the liturgical ideals of Dissent in the period 1644-61, made no provision whatever for singing at the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The anomaly of the appearance of a growing body of Sacramental hymns in some Nonconformist churches between 1693 and 1709 was due in large measure, we think, to the influence of Richard Baxter.

We know that the content of congregational praise was one of the issues raised by the Presbyterian divines before the Savoy Conference called by Charles II in 1661. And Baxter's *A Petition for Peace: with the Reformation of the Liturgy*, published in that year, may be regarded as representing the Presbyterian point of

view. In it there are two interesting rubrics referring to the adoption of hymns at the Sacrament:

Here are also adjoynd a Thanksgiving for Christ and his benefits, and a Hymn to be used at the discretion of the Minister - - - (p. 36)

Next sing some part of the Hymn in meeter or some fit Psalm of Praise. (p. 58)

The hymn mentioned in the second rubric is *A Thanksgiving after the Receiving of the Lord's Supper*, one of six original hymns attached to the Sternhold and Hopkins Psalter, 1560-2. Thus Baxter found a precedent for an interest in Sacramental hymnody in the sixteenth century Lutheran element of the Old Version. Whereas his own contribution in this field of reform was meager and did not see print till after his death, there can be no doubt that the work of Barton, Boyse, Burgess (and probably Stennett), all of whom wrote hymns for the Sacrament, was inspired by his leadership, and cleared the way for Isaac Watts' group of hymns "prepared for the Lord's Supper," 1707-9.

In spite of his radical enthusiasm for hymns Baxter took a very conservative attitude towards metrical psalms. Far from wishing to evangelize the Book of Psalms, he wanted a metrical version closer to the Hebrew original. Accordingly he sought to renovate the *form* rather than the content of the traditional psalmody. His own experiment appeared posthumously in 1692 as *Paraphrase on the Psalms of David*, which has been aptly described as "the oddest freak in all literary craftsmanship." By the addition or deletion of the necessary number of syllables, printed within brackets in black letter, Common Meter Psalms could be sung to Long or Short Meter tunes, and vice versa. Watts writes disparagingly of this artificial device of Baxter's for seasoning psalmody with the spice of variety, and points out a more excellent way. (3)

But if Baxter refused to evangelize the Psalms, he nevertheless freely christianized the *Benedicite*, labelling the finished product "Christian Philosophy." (4) We wonder did this christianized version of a song almost venerated as Old Testament scripture, give a clue to Isaac Watts in his similar treatment of the Psalms? Be that as it may, Baxter unmistakably anticipated Watts' method in verse 24 of his paraphrase of the *Benedicite*:

O ye his chosen flock  
Brought near him by his love,  
His Church built on the Rock,  
Redeem'd for Joys above  
Your God adore



Your voices raise, And sing his praise  
For evermore.

Notice, again, how the theme of redemption through Christ is skillfully imported into verse 27:

Ye spirits of the Just,  
Advanc'd by saving grace,  
Who here in Christ did trust,  
And now behold his face,  
In heav'n above  
You joyfully, There magnifie  
The God of Love.

This isolated example of the christianizing of a scripture song (for the *Benedicite* is also a paraphrastical exposition of *Ps. 148* and was used as a hymn in the later Jewish Church) would remain an enigma did we not know that among the proposals put forward by the Presbyterian divines at the Savoy Conference, was one "to appoint some . . . Scripture hymn instead of the apocryphal *Benedicite*." This evangelical rendering of the *Benedicite* was apparently Baxter's answer to a crying need. He felt at liberty, as he tells us, to "explain the Apocryphal Hymns" in the light of the Gospel, but he "durst not venture to take the same freedom with the Psalms." (5)

In his support of hymns merely as a supplement to metrical psalms, Baxter determined, or at least foreshadowed, the practice of English and Scottish Presbyterianism in their main streams, till well into the nineteenth century. Whereas Watts and his school, adopting the christianized psalm, which by a process of natural evolution led to the evangelical hymn, adumbrated the later use by the Independent churches of a hymn book as the main, if not the sole staple of communal praise. The now almost complete departure from the traditional psalmody, let it be said in Baxter's favor, has been only a mixed blessing, as some phases of English psalmody since Watt's day clearly show. However it appears beyond dispute that Baxter's earnest plea for a supplemental hymnody did prepare Metropolitan Presbyterianism to respond kindly to the hymn side of Isaac Watts' reform. For at the beginning of the eighteenth century it seems that Watts' *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* found greater favor with the leading Presbyterian ministers of London than with their Independent brethren. (Thomas Bradbury's references to "Watts' (w)hims" illustrates the attitude of left-wing Independency to Watts' reform.) And the reason for

(Continued on p. 118)

# “Here, O Most High”

KATHERINE L. ALLER

(TUNE: SINE NOMINE)

Here, O Most High, we come like those who bore  
Thy glorious standard in the days of yore;  
And, joined with them, we would Thy Name adore.  
Alleluia! Alleluia!

Here shall Thy presence shed its light around,  
And here the fulness of all joy abound.  
Here shall our feet be set on holy ground.  
Alleluia! Alleluia!

Before Thine altar, Holiest and Best,  
Let our repentant souls be shriv'n and blest,  
And find in Thee a pure and perfect rest.  
Alleluia! Alleluia!

Forth from Thy temple gladly let us fare,  
With all the world th' eternal truth to share;  
As heralds of the Light, Thy way prepare.  
Alleluia! Alleluia!

(Words copyright by The Hymn Society of America, 1952)

Of the origin of this hymn, Miss Aller writes: “In the spring of 1949, when ‘For all the saints’ was sung to the Vaughan Williams tune, as a recessional by massed choirs at the annual Mount Vernon (New York) Ecumenical Service, I was deeply stirred and found the music continually ringing in my memory as time went by. The idea then came to me that new words might express the reality of our present fellowship with those who had gone before, and could appropriately be sung to the same music for the text ‘For all the saints.’”

Miss Aller is the author of “O Thou the Way Eternal,” one of three hymns of faith and dedication published by The Hymn Society of America in 1942, and also included in the Thirtieth Anniversary “Representative Hymns of the Twentieth Century,” recently published.



# Representative American Hymns

GEORGE LITCH KNIGHT

AMONG THE EVENTS of the Thirtieth Anniversary celebration of The Hymn Society of America was the publication of a leaflet containing "Representative American Hymns of the Twentieth Century." Seventeen hymns were printed with tunes and an additional eighteen were listed as "Further Appropriate Twentieth Century American Hymns." It might naturally be asked upon what basis the first seventeen were selected. There was no attempt at a scientific "count" of the number of times a given hymn appeared in various hymnals; rather, those hymns which seemed to have "won their way" during the past two decades and which apparently possessed innate poetic and spiritual quality were selected.

There were certain obvious selections: "God of Grace and God of Glory," "Joyful, joyful we adore Thee," "The Voice of God is calling," "O Holy City," "Rise up, O men of God," "We praise Thee, O God, our Redeemer, Creator," and "Where cross the crowded ways of life." On the whole, the editors of the finer hymnals have included these during the last two decades.

Next an effort was made to locate additional hymns which, though possibly not so well known, showed signs of increasing popularity in American hymnals. For example, this applied to Dr. Tweedy's "Eternal God, Whose Power," which, in spite of its lack of a "proper" tune, has been included in a number of the better recent books. Dr. Howard Chandler Robbins' majestic "Put forth, O God," was selected as a hymn deserving wider usage in the future.

The selection was not, of course, an exclusive one. There were many of the hymns necessarily placed upon the supplementary list which might well have been in the primary listing, had they been more widely known or used. The absence of appropriate tunes and singable ones caused some otherwise fine lyrics to be omitted.

At the conclusion of compilation the editors were interested to note that many of their selections coincided with those of Dr. Henry Wilder Foote in his monumental *Three Centuries of American Hymnody* and some of those mentioned in his recent Paper on contemporary American hymnody.

Most gratifying of all was the realization that the fount of hymnic inspiration had not run dry with the end of the nineteenth century. There have been from time to time editorial expressions

of the lack of twentieth century hymns of high quality, but the selection made for the Society anniversary would seem to disprove this.

For those who may be using the Hymn Leaflets during the months ahead, some annotations about the individual hymns may be of help.

1. "God of Grace" was written by Dr. Fosdick for use at the dedication of Riverside Church, New York City. He is the leading Baptist hymn writer, and one is interested to note the emphasis upon the "church" as a redemptive agency in human society, especially in the light of nineteenth century Baptist "low church" emphasis. The virile dynamic of Fosdick's social conscience is expressed in the last stanza, which is, unfortunately, not quite comparable to his best writing.

3. "Joyful, joyful we adore Thee" is from the pen of The Brick Church's most distinguished minister. (See "The Brick Church's Contribution to American Hymnody," *THE HYMN*, Vol. III, No. 3.) The text is a joyous outpouring of the soul's response to the beauty of creation seen in nature and in the lives of the redeemed. There is a distinct freedom from earlier Presbyterian bondage to Watts and the theology of salvation. Dr. van Dyke's hymn has "worn well," and his theological approach, midway between Liberalism and Neo-orthodoxy, makes it a hymn free from a doctrinal limitation.

3. "Put forth, O God" voices a prayer for the Church. It is not primarily a didactic hymn, though there is a felicitous reference to one of the primary tenets of the Anglican Church, apostolic succession. The fourth stanza is reminiscent of the Psalmist's cry of the human soul after the ultimate peace of God. This hymn is extremely popular, when known, among non-Anglicans.

4. "Let there be Light" was written by an independent missionary in the Far East. It is a flowering of the pre-war pacificism widely emphasized in the first ten years of this century. Perhaps its strongest line is,

Make us Thy Messengers of Life,  
a prayer applicable to men of all creeds.

5. "Take Thou our Minds" was well described in "Hymnody of the Twentieth Century," *THE HYMN*, Vol. III, No. 2, and has won its way partially because of its great popularity in youth conferences across the country. The tune to which it is sung is not particularly virile, though generally liked by those who sing the hymn. The strong emphasis in the words upon bringing in the



Kingdom of God in this generation comes through the last line of the second stanza. One is reminded of the great work of John R. Mott in earlier years of the century with his phenomenal influence upon the young men of American colleges and seminaries.

6. "O sing a song" is certainly one of Dr. Benson's hymns most likely to become classic. Its happy wedding to the tune KINGSFOLD is certainly one good reason for its favorable reception during the present century. The text is didactic, in the long and honored tradition of that type of hymn. It is a deeply spiritual retelling of the "old, old story" in contemporary terms. Benson's interest in the historical Jesus is refreshing amid the prevalent "mythological" interpretation of Jesus of Nazareth.

7. "The Voice of God is Calling" represents a cry of social protest, couched in terms not unlike those of the eighth century prophets with their passion for social justice. The word "slum" appears for the first time in a Christian hymn here. Note the hymn's innate strength, largely due to use of thesis and anti-thesis.

8. "O Lord of Life" is from the pen of one of the leading Unitarian hymn writers. Dr. Ham continues to write hymns, though he is past threescore years and ten. This hymn was written just before the World War and expresses what seems now to be a rather over-optimistic view of human potentialities in building the Kingdom of God on earth. However, theological emphases change, and there may be a time when this hymn will again express human longings in a way that is in greater favor than just now. Dr. Ham is classed as a representative of the classic Unitarianism of the last century, and is essentially theistic in his theology.

9. "Eternal God, Whose Power" is a hymn in which science and art, two noble disciplines of the human spirit, not often mentioned in hymns, are prominent. The hymn effectively expresses the thought that all gifts of men's learning may be brought into the greater service of Christ, and it is somewhat of the same vein as George Matheson's "Gather us in," which also expresses the belief that all men who seek the truth of God are one in spirit.

10. "O Holy City, seen of John" was written about the time of the rather widespread protest which arose upon the revelation that Trinity Church, New York City, owned some of the worst slums on the lower East Side. Dr. Bowie, as were many of his fellow Episcopalian clergy, was convinced that the degradation of human life wrought by the slums and tenements was far from

the vision of the City of God described in the Apocalypse. Poetically, the lines,

Lo, how its splendor challenges  
The souls that greatly dare,  
Yea, bids us seize the whole of life  
And build its glory there!

are among the finest of the entire collection of Representative Hymns. Contemporary efforts at taking the Church to the slums stem from earlier social concern, and one hopes there will be some hymns of similar quality which will come out of the experiences of our own time.

11. "Rise up, O men of God" is probably the most widely known and sung of the entire collection. Its first line is the theme for national Laymen's Sunday, during October, 1952. One of the reasons for the hymn's strength is the terse quality of its lines, and the almost exclusive use of words derived from Anglo-Saxon vintage. The hymn is widely known abroad, used frequently for Confirmation services.

12. "O God of all our Fruitful Years" comes from Dr. Thomas Curtis Clark, often called "the Laureate of Religious Poetry." He has made a number of collections of Christian poetry, and has himself written many hymns, some of which are gradually finding their way into contemporary hymnals. This particular hymn appeared in The Hymn Society's "Hymns of Christian Patriotism," published during the last war.

13. "God of our Life" was written for the dedication of a Presbyterian Church, and its lines reflect the early Presbyterian nurture of metrical psalm versions. Dr. Kerr wrote it in 1916. The strongest line poetically is:

And faith's fair vision changes into sight.

The use of the tune SANDON is not pleasing to some musicians, but it seems to fit the text quite well.

14. "Lord God of Hosts" was written by Dr. Knapp, onetime Assistant Minister of The Brick Church, for its Men's Association. It is a hymn which has found wider usage with the passing years, but its thoughts are those of an earlier period's emphases. Certainly its essential greatness overcomes this fact. The third stanza is certainly among the great poetic contributions in this hymn collection:

O Prince of Peace, Thou bringer of good tidings,  
Teach us to speak Thy word of hope and cheer—  
Rest for the soul, and strength for all man's striving,  
Light for the path of life, and God brought near.



15. "O Thou the Way Eternal" was written by Miss Aller as a hymn of Faith and Dedication. The note of mysticism, so long absent from American hymnody of the past hundred years, appears here, though often expressed in terms so contemporary that one is conscious of it with suddenness of impact. Such is the case with the third stanza, commencing,

O Thou, the Life eternal, *Invade* our lives we pray;  
which seems to this writer a masterful use of the "right word" to describe an uncommon spiritual experience, vouchsafed to some Christians. The lines continue:

Live Thou in all our living, *Inform* anew each day.  
Flow like a broadening river, Enrich our lives, that we,  
Thy fullness still receiving, May ever live in Thee.

The hymn was written during war-time when the "invasion" was in everyone's minds, and it is a likely supposition that the word "invade" came out of the subconscious, happily a felicitous usage. The hymn's freedom from sentimentality, often associated with mystical texts, is refreshing.

16. "We praise Thee, O God" was written upon the request of the late Archer Gibson when he was organist at The Brick Church, New York City. The words were original with Mrs. Cory (then Julia B. Cady) and are a great improvement over the text usually sung with the tune. The influence of Biblical criticism caused the word "Jehovah" to be removed in a later recension of the text.

17. "Where cross the crowded ways of life" was fully described and annotated in the article by William Watkins Reid, "Frank Mason North—An Appreciation," *THE HYMN*, Vol. I., No. 3. The hymn text is one which probably will live as long as the social gospel is a part of religious concern. There is a vitality of poetic quality which, coupled with a faithfulness to the scriptural account it paraphrases, is the source of its vigor.

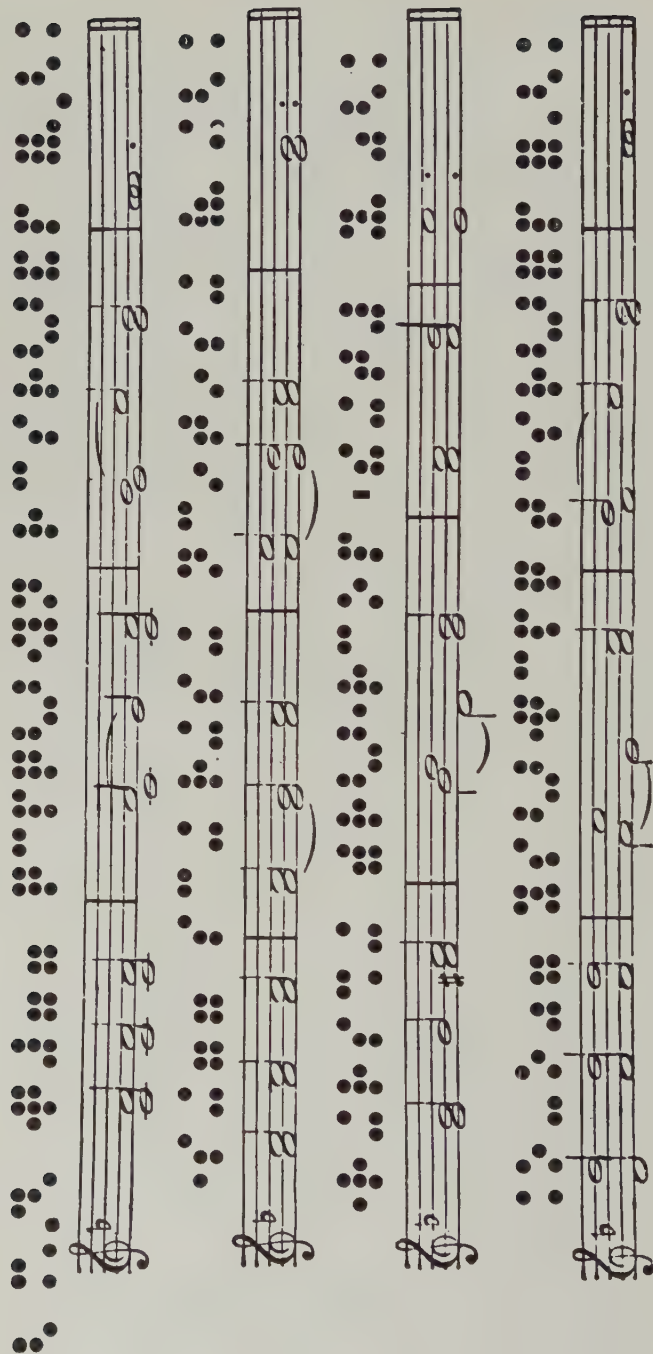
It is indeed pleasing to note the generally wide acceptance of many of these hymns which are the product of this century. Some have found almost immediate use upon first publication.

Perhaps the pervasive thought which lingers after a careful analysis of "Representative American Hymns of the Twentieth Century" is that so many factors have influenced the writers of the hymns contained therein.

Though no two of the hymns are fully alike, each has individually struck a chord of thought which is both unique and universal. This is certainly one test of the worth of any hymn.

## SUN OF MY SOUL.

HORSLEY.





# Hymns For The Blind

J. VINCENT HIGGINSON

THE ART OF communication has prodded man's ingenuity for ages. While we all realize it, few on first thought would be likely to mention braille as a major means of communication. Centuries ago the written word solved the problem of communication for the normal person, but it was not until the modern era that a really efficient system was found for the blind.

This year, 1952, which makes the centenary of the death of Louis Braille (1808-1852), inventor of the braille system, is an appropriate time to recall the advantage which braille has brought. It has been only about seventy-five years since braille became a household word and received some of its present international recognition. The past year has brought many celebrations in honor of Louis Braille, notably in France, where he is buried with other great heroes and statesmen in the Pantheon.

Strange as it may seem, Braille, who was blinded by an accident before he was four years old, had solved the vexing problem of a raised point system at the age of twenty. While we must give him credit for his ingenuity, the time and circumstances were favorable for inspiring him to experiment in the hope of bettering conditions for himself and his fellow pupils at the Paris school.

Louis Braille was taught by the current system of embossed writing, and that approach had proven rather unsatisfactory for music. He had a good talent for music; from 1833 he held the position of organist in a Paris church. In his anxiety to aid his reading and the notating of music he produced the scheme that in the end could also be applied to letters, figures and so forth. His first book, entitled *The Method of Writing Words and Music and Plainsongs by Means of Dots, for Use by the Blind and Arranged for Them*, (1829), shows how strongly music influenced his invention. As braille developed in different localities, variations appeared, but in spite of these, today there is but one music code, and that practically as created by Braille.

Hymnology has not been overlooked in the numerous books for the blind. Hymnals for several denominations are available in braille with both words and music, others with the words alone. Edward Watson, an English leader in advancing the work of the blind, is the author of *The Church History in Song, a History of Hymnology*. Among the hymnals available are the Episcopal, Lutheran, Christian Science, Presbyterian, as well as the *St. Gre-*

gory, *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, the *English Hymnal* and others. The scores of larger works such as oratorios are available in braille. Our illustration gives the transcription of a well-known hymn tune in braille notation with the exception that the black dots for the "seeing" appear as raised points in braille. Of late years, records, and more recently, tape recordings, are an added help, though braille remains the basic approach. The name of Frank H. Hall, who in the early 1890's invented a typewriter for the printing of braille, should not be omitted from this account.

Louis Braille did not live to see his system officially adopted in France (1854), and it was not until the late 1870's that it achieved international recognition. He would have rejoiced and probably would have forgotten the many disheartening moments if he had been able to witness the June, 1952, celebration at Notre Dame, Paris, where a choir of blind singers, as well as many of the blind congregation, joined in the singing. Through the genius of Louis Braille a new world has been opened for these handicapped people.

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"THE INFLUENCE OF RICHARD BAXTER" (from p. 109)

this is not far to seek. Baxter and his followers had broken up the stubborn ground and watered it against the time of Watts' potent sowing.

In conclusion, what Percy Dearmer calls "the magnificent aggression of Isaac Watts" (6) is foreshadowed in Baxter's defiant stance against a strongly accoutered prejudice of his age. He tells us in the preface to his *Psalms* that he has added Gospel Hymns "to confute them that think that no forms of Worship but those found in Scripture may be used. . . . It is past doubt," he continues, "that Hymns more suitable to Gospel times, may and ought to be now used."

In all these ways Richard Baxter would seem to be the true, though unacknowledged, prophet and herald of the modern English hymn.

#### NOTES

1. James Hamilton, *Our Christian Classics*, vol. 1, 379.
2. See also *The Saint's Everlasting Rest*, Bk. iv, Ch. 5, Sect. vii (9th ed. 1662); J. Spenser Curwen, *Studies in Worship Music*, 1880, p. 43, for quotation from Baxter.
3. Preface to *Psalms of David Imitated* . . . 1719, p. xxvii, par. 1.
5. *Ibid.*, Preface, Sect. 5.
6. *Songs of Praise Discussed*, 1933, Introd. p. xv.



# Welsh Hymnody

DANIEL HUGHES

**D**URING THE PAST four years a committee\* has been at work to prepare a Welsh-English hymnal. The completed book contains 322 Welsh hymns and 322 English hymns set to 322 tunes with no duplicates. The plan has been an exhaustive one, as each Welsh hymn had to be matched to an English hymn of the same meter, and of a uniform subject.

The hymns are ancient and modern, and selected with care to assure a variety covering necessary expressions of the spiritual life. Hundreds of hymnals were consulted and there are a number of original contributions by expert hymn writers. Several Welsh and English hymns have been translated both ways to insure uniformity of subject as well as to preserve the best in both languages.

There has been a steadily growing interest in Welsh hymnody during the present century in America. It may be of interest briefly to trace the origins of Welsh hymnody.

As in other countries, hymnody in Wales derives from psalm singing. At first Wales was indebted to Scotland for its psalm tunes, as Scotland had been indebted to Geneva. Edmund Prys (Edmund Price) adapted the psalms to the need of Wales, and many of his versions are in use today, composed in such a way as to convey the dignified movement of the original, but in hymn form, using internal rhymes. Thus, he rendered the psalm singable in classic Welsh. His subject was exclusively "Praise" so that theological references do not enter into his productions.

The outstanding name in Welsh hymnody is William Williams (1717-1791), always referred to as "Pantycelyn" according to the prevalent Welsh custom of adopting as a nom-de-plume or bardic name, the name of one's birthplace. Williams is to Wales what Watts is to England. Both composed extensively in smooth rhymes and included much evangelical theology through their hymns. Williams is known primarily to English folk for his "Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah," the hymn of pilgrimage. He wrote in a variety of styles, frequently expressing the note of prayerful contrition, as in the words,

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\* The Hymnal Committee of the Welsh Church, Detroit, Michigan. The result of their work is *Praise and Song*, compiled by them and privately published in 1952.

Come, Lord Jesus, to the desert,  
 See a sinner lowly laid,  
 or of triumph, when he says,  
 By free grace I'll conquer all,  
 Why should I fear whate'er befall?

Mention should also be made of the mystic, Ann Griffiths, of the same period, who composed a number of hymns. "Author of all life there dying" is a masterful use of paradox.

A famous national religious revival was experienced throughout Wales in 1859 which produced many hymn and tune writers, many of whom exerted an influence which still persists in Welsh hymnody. Dr. William Rees, always known as Hiraethog, may be quoted here. A more joyful and robust note now enters Welsh hymnody, typical of the revival spirit at its best. Penitence was the note of Williams' day, conquest that of Hiraethog's day. A man of many parts, an all-round genius, his lyric spirit is expressed in such lines as,

Come, rejoice, ye highest mountains,  
 Fill with joy the sunlight day.

When we come to our own time, we have several Welsh hymn writers of merit, of whom Dr. Elfet Lewis is the most prolific. His hymns are devotional and popular and included in all modern Welsh hymnals. Some are free and excellent imitations of English authors of the Evangelical type.

It is interesting to note that from the earlier generation one hymn which definitely expresses the theme of social reform has come down to us. Its author, R. J. Derfel, was a Baptist minister, many years ahead of his own time, and too ardent a reformer to be comfortable in his calling of the ministry—which he felt he must resign. We may cite from his hymn:

Against each tyrant skilled and strong  
 O, stand beside the weak;  
 Bring down the proud man's arrogance  
 And raise the poor and meek.

Though the reader may be aware of the absence of the modern effort to relate Christian tenets to practical social life in most Welsh hymns, there is evidence of a gradual departure from the former hymns expressing a rather sentimental longing to enter Paradise and to leave this world to its doom. In this trend we may see the dawn of a new era in Welsh hymnody. There are poets chaired and crowned who could hasten the day, but they have con-

*(Continued on p. 122)*



The writer of the prize-winning hymn, sung for the first time at the nation-wide services celebrating the publication of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, is shown above with the Reverend Deane Edwards, President of The Hymn Society of America, on the left, with the Reverend Philip S. Watters, chairman of the Society's Bible Hymn Committee, on the right.

### The Winning Bible Hymn "THE DIVINE GIFT"

O God of Light, Thy word, a lamp unfailing,  
Shines through the darkness of our earthly way,  
O'er fear and doubt, o'er black despair prevailing,  
Guiding our steps to thine eternal day.

From days of old, through swiftly rolling ages,  
Thou hast revealed Thy will to mortal men,  
Speaking to saints, to prophets, kings and sages,  
Who wrote the message with immortal pen.

Undimmed by time, the word is still revealing  
To sinful men Thy justice and Thy grace;  
And questing hearts that long for peace and healing  
See Thy compassion in the Saviour's face.

To all the world the message Thou art sending,  
To every land, to every race and clan;  
And myriad tongues, in one great anthem blending,  
Acclaim with joy Thy wondrous gift to man.

—SARAH E. TAYLOR

(Words copyright 1952 by The Hymn Society of America)



## Announcement To Our Readers

It is a pleasure to announce that Dr. Ruth Messenger's book, *The Medieval Latin Hymn*, will be published in January, 1953. The members of our Society are familiar with her work as represented in the *Papers of The Hymn Society*, and in previous issues of THE HYMN. She has also contributed widely to scholarly periodicals on the subject of medieval Latin hymnology.

The forthcoming book, of 160 pages, will treat of the following: Chapters I and II are devoted to *The Early Middle Ages: Latin Hymns of the Fourth Century* and *The Old Hymnal*; Chapters III and IV to *The Ninth Century Revival: Hymns and Sequences*; Chapters V and VI to *The Late Middle Ages: Hymns and Sequences* and *Processional Hymns*. Chapter VIII treats of *The Influence and Survival of Latin Hymns*. An inclusive *Bibliography* has been appended.

The purpose of the book, which is intended for the general reader as well as students of hymnology, is to trace the history of The Medieval Latin Hymn from the point of view of usage. Illustrative hymns with the finest translations available in English have been selected for the volume.

The cost will be \$3.25 but advance orders will be accepted at a pre-publication price of \$2.75. Orders may be sent directly to Dr. Ruth E. Messenger, 720 West End Avenue, New York 25, N. Y.

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### "WELSH HYMNODY"

(Continued from p. 120)

fined themselves to long poems, the closed meters, and recently to the sonnet. Dr. Moelwyn Hughes is an exception. His fine popular hymn praises the "strong city" both here and beyond:

Who shall lead to that strong city,  
Where God's feast shall never cease,  
Where the breeze is ever holy,  
Where the paths are paved with peace?  
Happy morning  
When I walk that golden street.

Toward the preservation of the finest in the historic hymnody of Wales, as well as the presentation of the modern trend in hymns the hymnal *Praise and Song* has been prepared. Its bilingual character makes it available for Welsh-English churches throughout the world, and its many original features commend it to every hymn lover, both in Welsh and in English tradition.

## NOTES FROM THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

NOW IT CAN BE TOLD—Tuesday, September 30, 1952, was a red-letter day for religion in America, for it marked the release of the completed Revised Standard Version of the Bible. Plans for celebration were underway during the past two years, and they culminated in a nation-wide observance.

The occasion was also a milestone for The Hymn Society. The committee in charge of the publication of the Revised Version asked the Society to conduct a competition from which would come a new hymn, suitable for use in the celebrations. Dr. Earl Harper and Dr. Philip Watters served as chairmen of the committee which passed on the hymns submitted.

Over 3,400 communities across the United States and in Canada celebrated the publication of the Bible with services of "thanksgiving and dedication."

The complete program for the services, produced by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches, contained readings from the new translation, and the text of the new Bible Hymn. Neither the Bible itself nor the words of the hymn could be released before the celebration date.

Some of the members of the Society were privileged to meet the author of the winning hymn, Miss Sarah E. Taylor, of Central Falls, R. I., on September 12th. Miss Taylor, a retired school teacher, was a missionary teacher in the South for six years. Born in England in 1883, she is the daughter of Primitive Methodist parents. She writes concerning her hymn: "It was

not too difficult to write, and I enjoyed the subject. My first inspiration for the words came one night shortly after I retired. Suddenly a phrase came to me, and thereafter, each night shortly before going to sleep I would think of lines to add to that first phrase. The middle portion of the hymn came first, then the beginning, and finally the end. But as I recall it all, the text was thought out after I had retired at night."

Some comment upon the tunes suggested may be in order. To satisfy the requirement that there be one tune universally known, ANCIENT OF DAYS was given first place, while CHARTERHOUSE, a hymn tune of high merit, though found in fewer hymnals, was suggested as an alternate.

It is too early to indicate the impact made by this hymn, though nearly 900,000 copies of the official program containing it were printed. It would be safe to say that at least a million persons sang the new hymn during the celebration.

To make the hymn available for churches across the country, The Hymn Society is making a four-page folder, containing the hymn set to both tunes. Copies may be ordered directly from the Office of the Society, 297 Fourth Avenue, New York.

WORD HAS JUST COME of the meeting of Hymn Society members held in Los Angeles for the organization of a Chapter of the Society, on Tuesday evening, September 30th. Miss Ruth Needham called the meeting as temporary chairman. Miss Taylor's hymn was sung. The following officers were elected: Chairman, Dr.

Charles C. Hirt, Instructor at University of Southern California, and in charge of music at First Presbyterian Church, Hollywood; Assistant Chairman, Miss Ruth Needham; Secretary-treasurer, Dillon W. Throckmorton, Jr. An excellent address was given by the Reverend Carl W. Berner, D.D., on "The Function of the Hymn in Public Worship." Thirty persons were reported present.

THE EDITOR OF THE HYMN was the speaker for a Hymn Festival sponsored by the Philadelphia Chapter of The Hymn Society on Sunday, October 5, at the First Presbyterian Church in that city. He gave an address based on the collection of "Representative American Hymns of the Twentieth Century." Choirs from several metropolitan Philadelphia churches participated in the program which was the first in the annual series of noteworthy "musical vespers" under the direction of Dr. Alexander McCurdy, organist and choirmaster of the Church.

THE HYMN SOCIETY has recently sustained the loss of two of its oldest and most valued members. On August 2nd, the Reverend George Albert Simons, DD., passed away. He was a charter member of the Society. On September 16th we learned of the death of the Reverend Lindsay B. Longacre, Ph.D., at his home in New York. He was among the early members of the Society, and its Secretary at the time of his death. A tribute to Dr. Simons, written by his friend Karl P. Harrington, appears elsewhere in this issue, and a tribute to Dr. Longacre is in the course of preparation, for publication in the next issue of THE HYMN.

#### AMONG OUR CONTRIBUTORS

*The Reverend Harry Escott, M.A., Ph.D.*, is the minister of Hillhead Congregational Church in Glasgow. He is the author of several books of literary criticism, poetry, and theology. He is a member of the Hymn Society of Great Britain and Ireland, and the Hymn Society of America. . . . The Reverend Daniel Hughes, D.D., has recently completed fifty years in the ministry, and has been the pastor of the Welsh Church in Detroit, from which a committee of laymen was formed to direct the preparation of *Praise and Song*. The hymnal will be reviewed in a subsequent issue of THE HYMN. . . . *J. Vincent Higginson* is the managing editor of THE CATHOLIC CHOIRMASTER and a Contributing Editor of THE HYMN.

#### IN MEMORIAM

The Rev. George Albert Simons died on August 2, 1952, at Glendale, Long Island. His early ministry in the Methodist Church in this country was followed by a period of distinguished service for Methodism in central and eastern Europe. In 1907 he became Superintendent of the Finland and St. Petersburg Mission Conference and thereafter his activities both in peace and war, extended from London to Rome. He headed the Baltic States Mission Conference at the time of his return to the United States, in 1924, indignant, after years of missionary labors in Latvia, at the methods of the Russians for their devastating intrigues against Protestant Church in that tyrannously oppressed subsidiary country.

After his return with his sister Otilie, who had been his companion in Europe, he was engaged in caring



for the Methodist Church in Glendale, Long Island. When his sister lost her health and was confined to her room, he became her devoted nurse for many years. Though that consumed much of his time, he was ever in "labors more abundant" for the church, and always found the time left to write poems and hymns, and prepare services for his Church.

He was one of the earliest members of the Hymn Society and a faithful supporter of its projects. One of his last efforts was an excellent hymn submitted in the Bible Hymn Contest, although not chosen for the prize.

Dr. Simons, as minister, lecturer, author, editor, administrator, was the recipient of many degrees and other honors both in Europe and the United States, among them Chevalier of the Cross, Order of the White Rose of Finland, first class. His success with the Glendale Church was so notable that he was continued by the Bishops in the appointment long after the ordinary age of retirement. He will be greatly missed, not only there, but also among his many friends throughout the Church and the Hymn Society.

—KARL P. HARRINGTON

#### REVIEW — *The Editor*

*The Brethren Hymnal*, Authorized by Annual Conference, Church of the Brethren, House of Church of the Brethren Hymnody is a fascinating venture into the post-Reformation era when the Church of the Brethren came into existence. Before opening the new hymnal one ought really to peruse "The History of Brethren Hymnbooks," a scholarly treatise by Nevin W. Fisher, published in 1950 shortly

before the latest in a long series of hymnals in the denomination. Chapter XII, a "Comparative Study of the Eight Principal Hymnbooks, Compiling all First Lines . . ." traces individual hymn appearances from 1791 to 1951.

As we turn to the hymnal at hand it is pleasing to note the high standard of format. Mr. Fisher is the author of excellent material entitled "The Use of the Hymnal," with practical suggestions to the organists and ministers who will make use of the book. Upon examination of the hymns themselves, one first notes the use of symbols indicating portions of the hymn tune which may be used for an introductory "playing over." Such a device is indeed a most valuable and creative aid to the inexperienced church musician, and one hopes that it will be copied by other hymnal editors.

A generous selection of hymns—614 in all—includes a representative group of gospel songs, chorales, Brethren hymns, as well as the "standard" hymns one would expect to find. There are about forty responses, well selected. Seven antiphons for minister and choir (or congregation) are included.

The section entitled "Worship Aids" contains both Old and New Testament congregational readings, as well as prayers for other service use. There is, however, no distinctive liturgical material of the Brethren tradition included. A complete scriptural index and the usual topical index follow. A word about the latter: cross-indexing to show suitable hymns for children and young people is expertly handled and deserves study for future use.

The selection of hymns was, of course, the result of committee work. (The work of that hymnal committee,

incidentally, was thorough and representative of the denomination.) Thus, one must excuse some of the selections of material included. Most unfortunate, in this reviewer's opinion, is the inclusion of a rather large amount of contemporary texts and tunes which simply do not stand up to the over-all quality of the hymnal. There are some first-rate Brethren composers and authors, but not all of their results are happy ones. It would be unfair to single out any particular individual hymn text or tune for criticism, as the other merits of the hymnal far outweigh this particular opinion.

One is impressed favorably by the careful selection of texts to assure that all phases of contemporary religions emphasis and expression are represented. *The Brethren Hymnal* is a book which contains both a cross section of the great traditional hymnody of the universal church and some of the best material of the present century. Perhaps there might be reason to question the inclusion of a large percentage of "5 stanza" hymns, especially in view of the general trend toward wise editing of longer texts in most contemporary hymnals.

With the exception of some of the inferior tunes and texts by contemporary Brethren writers and composers, the contents of the book deserves study and consideration by students of hymnology. One senses the attempt to meet all needs and all types of response from church-goers. This hymnal will find a welcome in city as well as the most humble rural churches.

We are grateful to Mr. Fisher and his fellow Brethren committee members for the painstaking and conscientious labor which has gone into the

new hymnal. Its value within the denomination will certainly be equalled by its interest to anyone desiring to keep abreast of contemporary trends in American hymnody.

### "VICTORIAN HYMNS"

Since the publication of Mr. Calhoun's article, "Selection of Hymn Tunes—One More Word," Vol. III, Number 3, the Editors have received a number of communications from readers. It will be recalled that Mr. Calhoun took issue with the opinions expressed regarding Victorian Hymns by Ray F. Brown in his article which appeared in the April, 1952, issue of *THE HYMN*. Extracts from this correspondence will be published in a future issue, and readers desiring to express opinions regarding the matters at issue are invited to do so. Please send such letters to Dr. Ruth E. Messenger, 720 West End Avenue, New York 25, N. Y.

### CORRECTIONS

In the article "Brick Church's Role in American Hymnody" which appeared in *THE HYMN*, Vol. III, Number 3, there were a number of errors, here corrected. A reference is made to the meeting of a committee which met to revise Watts' Psalms on page 74, and the date should be 1800, not 1880. On page 75 reference is made to Charles H. Richards, who is there called "a minister of The Brick Church during the early twentieth century." He was not a minister of the Church. Dr. William R. Richards was a minister of the Church from 1902-1910. The name Kate Knapp Vondermuhll is misspelled on page 78.



# The Hymn Society of America

FOUNDED 1922      INCORPORATED 1938

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1951-1952

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\* Deceased: September 16, 1952.



## PAPERS OF THE HYMN SOCIETY

- I. **The Hymns of John Bunyan**  
Louis F. Benson, D.D.
- II. **The Religious Value of Hymns**  
William Pierson Merrill, D.D.
- III. **The Praise of the Virgin in Early Latin Hymns**  
Ruth Ellis Messenger, Ph.D.
- IV. **The Significance of the Old French Psalter**  
Professor Waldo Selden Pratt, L.H.D., Mus.D.
- V. **Hymn Festival Programs**
- VI. **What is a Hymn?**  
Carl Fowler Price, M.A.
- VII. **An Account of the Bay Psalm Book**  
Henry Wilder Foote, D.D.
- VIII. **Lowell Mason: an Appreciation of His Life and Work**  
Henry Lowell Mason
- IX. **Christian Hymns of the First Three Centuries**  
Ruth Ellis Messenger, Ph.D.
- X. **Addresses at the Twentieth Anniversary of the Hymn Society of America**
- XI. **Hymns of Christian Patriotism**
- XII. **Luther and Congregational Song**  
Luther D. Reed, D.D., A.E.D.
- XIII. **Isaac Watts and his Contributions to English Hymnody**  
Norman Victor Hope, M.A., Ph.D.
- XIV. **Latin Hymns of the Middle Ages**  
Ruth Ellis Messenger, Ph.D.
- XV. **Revival of Gregorian Chant: Its Effect on English Hymnody**  
J. Vincent Higginson, Mus.B., M.A.
- XVI. **The Hymn Festival Movement in America**  
Reginald L. McAll, Mus.D.
- XVII. **Recent American Hymnody**  
Henry Wilder Foote, D.D.

Copies may be obtained from the Hymn Society of America, 297 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y. Papers I-XV, 25 cents each: Papers XVI and XVII, 35 cents. Papers I, II, VI, VII, VIII, out of print.